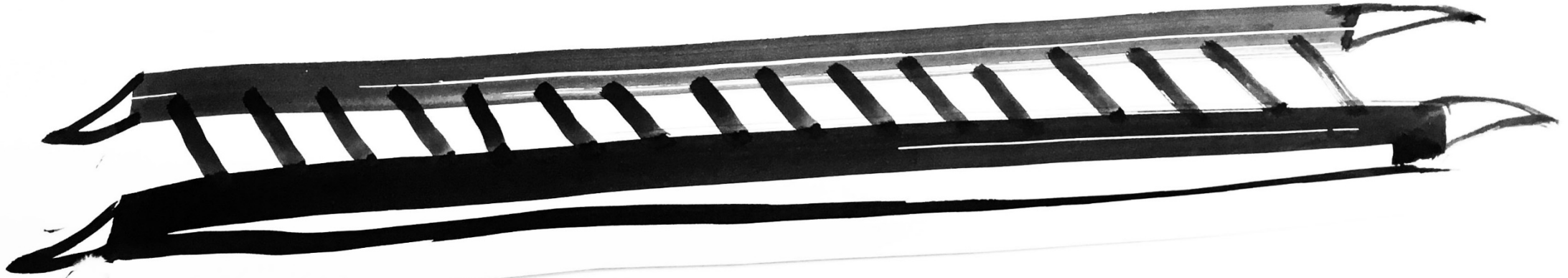


The Ladder lies down

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QED conference 2019



the vertical studio **concept**

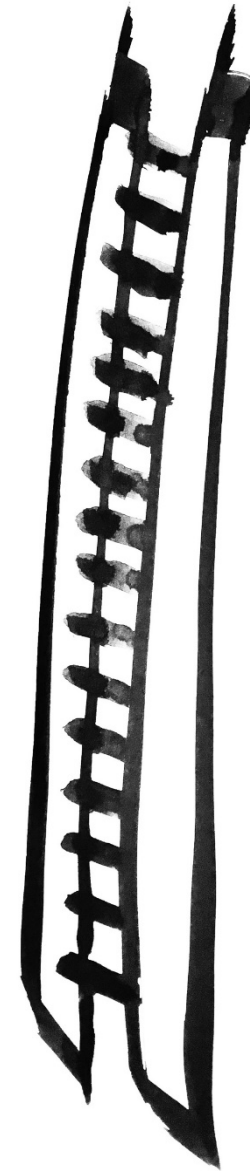
Was introduced chiefly to provide an environment that encourages interaction between students at all levels, providing an opportunity for mentoring and peer to peer learning and enriches understanding of their discipline in the context of higher education and the wider world.

The ladder lies down so that students from all levels can work and be together in shared environment with shared ambition to learn and discover from each other. Formally the vertical studio meets each week for discussion/talks/debates/presentation from the vertical studio participants and invited guests.

In developing the concept we hoped to enable students to have a richer learning experience in an environment that they had some ownership of.

We noticed that students by the end of level 4 and sometimes 5 had not grasped a full understanding of the purpose of higher education and the importance of self-directed learning within it. The Vertical Studio introduces and establishes peer assisted and autonomous learning between levels often without the presence of a member of staff; this Pecha Kucha will present a year in the development of the vertical studio. Encouraging ambition for their discipline the Vertical Studio concept has become vital in maintaining the sense of who the students are, why they are here, and how they engage in learning.

So that when the ladder stands up they feel able to climb it.



1.

To establish a community approach to using the studio, students will work together to create a working studio environment which integrates the years and develops different working zones for different approaches to practice.

2.

To make a publication/publications, working as a team/teams to output across all years. Improving editing and design skills, and art director skills by commissioning content from illustration and other art & design students.

3.

To encourage this through peer to peer mentoring and full cohort meetings with a joint sense of ambition integrating learning, establishing your responsibility as students illustrators and citizens of the world.

4.

To have a team approach to understanding and developing your understanding of the discipline. Cohort meetings will be compulsory; they will include notices and opportunities. Followed by presentations ideas sharing and academic sessions. You all have the opportunity to present at these meetings too, if you have ideas you want to discuss, topics to raise or work to share.

5.

For every student to have a peer mentor. Mentors will be allocated at the first cohort meeting; this mentor will be your critical friend, someone to talk to about work and ideas. We will also develop mentor groups so you meet a variety of students from levels across the discipline.

the discipline

Few people outside the world of illustration really understand what it is or even appreciate it. That essentially is not a problem, as illustration lives along side us in the world, it is part of our everyday, not invisible but so much a part of life that it is not questioned outside the discipline. However, this poses an important educational dilemma, in order to teach the discipline, there is a need to define, to challenge the definition and to explore the boundaries of that definition as much as the discipline itself.

Why?

I believe that education, in its many guises, is a powerful mechanism for change, good change, through transformation and challenge.

Teaching is more than the sum of its assessment parts, it is a natural pursuit of questioning and speculating through a discipline which invites students not only to observe and regard but to educationally/ pedagogically to participate.

Illustration is about educating, illustration translates, illuminates encourages persuades imagines, conjures possibilities, and is explored through infinite lenses, illustration can develop connections and dissuade misunderstandings by accompanying us all through life in ways which at times may appear invisible.

predicament

How can we work with these educational needs?

1. criticality

2. satisfaction

3. engagement

Satisfaction

Satisfaction is the problematic thing. It can lead to seeking only pleasure enjoyment and diversion, in modes of theatre we can see this, and within our discipline the predicament for our participant viewer is similar to the **predicament of the contemporary student**.

Dramatic Theatre (cathartic)	Epic Theatre (critical)
Plot	Narrative
Implicates the spectator in a stage situation wears down his capacity for action provides him with sensations the spectator is involved in something	Turned the spectator into an observer but arouses his capacity for action forces him to take decisions he is made to face something
Suggestion	Argument
the spectator is in the thick of it, shares experience	The spectator stands outside, studies
The Human being is taken for granted	The human being is the object of the enquiry
Feeling	Reason

Brechtian



Stanislawsky

Legitimate Peripheral Participation

(LPP)

This refers to situated learning theory much of which highlights the research in school of design into a similar Vertical studio concept, the difference in these models is that the vertical studio is more about cross level teaching whereas our concept is more about creating the catalyst for cross collaborative learning and sharing of experience to build confidence and ambition in students across levels from a wide range of background ethnicities and age groups.

The term legitimate peripheral participation is more general and relies on the osmosis of environment in the developing of keen learning environments beyond the delivery of the course specific curriculum.

CONTEXT

With **more levels** And to work more effectively with the discipline within the shared scheme

A need arose to:



Frame the discipline (both for the new MA students and the undergraduates)



Have a platform to announce/discuss/form ideas



Share research



Value progress, an important part of the meetings is to congratulate students who have done well with something externally i.e. Winner of Creative Conscience Award



Address a reluctance to participate or lead by asking students to mentor and lead mentor groups, to form a studio committee and to work as representatives of each other together to develop their discipline



Develop a working method away from the inclination 'to be served' or 'delivered' education



Shift perspectives for types of learning, peer to peer learning and building the value of that.



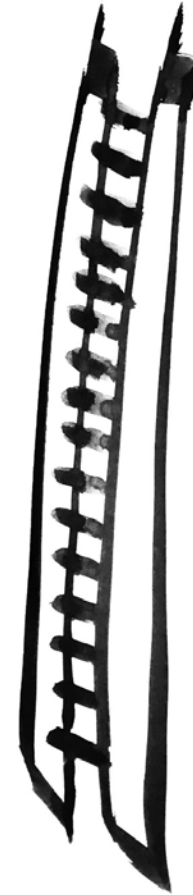
To better understand our learners

Conundrum

eg.

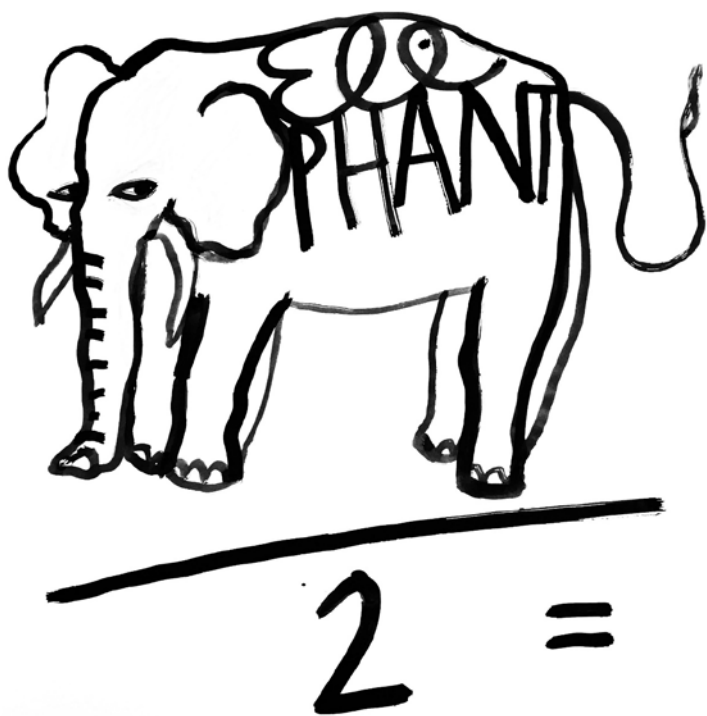


Silo



‘Clayton Christensen of Harvard explained that educators and institutions of higher learning can be the least innovative because they build **silos** and focus on deep learning rather than interdisciplinary problems and ideas.’

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/classic-example-how-difficult-fight-silo-mentality-become-don-capener>



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Tom
&
Army

Tom

For me, the vertical studio lectures are an integral part of both the Undergraduate and Postgraduate illustration courses. They were an opportunity for all years to come together in one place and listen or interact with a variety of talks; From Illustrators and makers to writers and charities.

As an undergraduate student the weekly vertical studios gave me an **opportunity to break away from my practice** and, often during a creative block, they **provided new perspectives and viewpoints on a process, purpose or context**. Some directly linked to my interests and research whereas some were less relevant but still often contained really useful nuggets of information.

It was always reassuring to hear about graduates and contemporary artists who had gone through similar struggles or pressures to my own. Similarly seeing new practices and ways of communicating also helped my own research and practice develop.



As a Postgraduate student, these experiences were very similar. However the depth and breadth of postgraduate research and practice meant I had the opportunity to give a vertical studio talk of my own. This was a vital experience to express questions and thoughts, which would otherwise have stayed in my sketchbook, to other year groups and disciplines. I gained constructive feedback about the illustrative responses to my research, which elements were not working and which to progress. It also helped to cohere the many different avenues of my research into something that I could articulate.

As well as being a space for accomplished illustrators to talk about their work, **the vertical studio is also important for current students to try out ideas and gain feedback from a larger audience.**

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray background. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and reads "Arwyn".

"I found my student experience of the vertical studio always full of surprises. You were never certain of the type of subjects or work you'd see from week to week, every session was unique with different approaches to work.

As a student I had my chance to use the vertical studio to express the themes and ideas of my project to all year groups. Through this I was able to gauge ideas from the group on my paper and work with the chance to enlighten them on a subject they may not be fully aware of.

I also got the opportunity to return to re introduce my work and final outcome as a visiting speaker. This was a great exercise for me as I was able to return with my conclusions and final thoughts, to present to the studio. I was able to engage with the studio to gain ideas and thoughts on these outcomes, which I found most useful."



Tom

As a graduate, the vertical studio is a place now for me to come back and help students who are in similar positions to my own, for example they may feel lost or have a creative blocks. I can share my experiences of being on both courses, the struggles and accomplishments, to help reassure or even inspire.

In the future they (Vertical Studio meetings) could still become a useful place to share new research and ideas to progress my practice and discipline further.

cells





The vertical studio concept is a holistic way of considering your discipline within the framework of your course as a whole and on our case the transdisciplinary scheme.

The concept developed due to a need to address a the shared nature of our creative practice, and to redefine our discipline within the context of the school and the wider world.

To some extent this has been successful. It might be useful to define it further as a formal part of the course, students do attend but not all and not all the time, working on how to continuously engage learners in our contemporary world is an ongoing problem however this has proved, at least for some, to be a nurturing challenging and ambitious concept which as you can see from Tom and Arwyn's experience had some success and this wouldn't have been possible without the engagement of the study body.